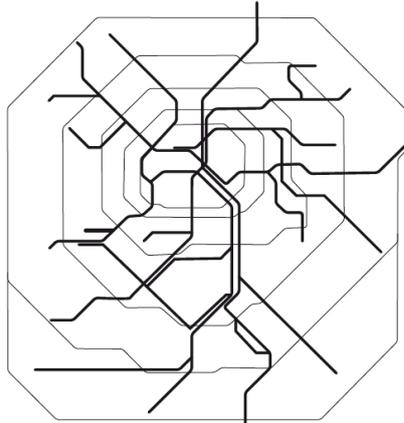


# VALLOIS

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Olav Westphalen **DE**  
Winshluss **FR**  
Virginie Yassef **FR**



## Alain Bublex Contributions



17  
October  
—  
26  
November  
2011

### OPENING

Saturday 15 October  
2011

/

### LATE OPENINGS

Thursday 20 October  
/  
Thursday 3 November

/

### LE VRAI SPORTIF EST MODESTE

(solo show)  
Parc Saint Léger  
Pougues-les-Eaux  
8 October - 20 December

What is this journey that Alain Bublex invites us to embark upon?

Certainly not the journey of Baudelaire's flâneur, or that of a tourist longing to see the Eiffel Tower. It is a journey to the heart of 21st century urbanity. For this is a unanimous fact: Paris has disappeared - or at least this city conceived as an autonomous and self-sufficient entity has. Today it has given way to a metropolis whose multiple facets spread out according to transport and communications networks. From a 'metropolitan area', Paris has become 'Grand Paris' ('Greater Paris'), and must push its historic metro and ring road borders further out so as to unfold the length of the regional express train (RER) and tram tracks.

Taking note of this new physiognomy, Alain Bublex attempts to give a face to a metropolis that is only embodied in plans and maps with coloured and abstract lines. A methodical observer, he casts aside the posture of the explorer adopted by François Maspero in his time (*Les passagers du Roissy-Express*, 1990). Here it is a question of an experiment, a protocol rigorously developed and applied to the whole Île de France RER network. The design of the network's lines and the frequency of the trains determine the route and the rhythm of the photographs.

Alain Bublex loses interest in the landscapes passed through and in his travelling companions; his focus is instead directed at these new ports installed along the rail rivers: railway stations. He thus seems to put to the test the desire of town

planners to make stations the metropolis's new central points. His exploration of the outskirts and adjacent streets is not at all a question of compiling an inventory of structures and infrastructures or of taking into account the specificities of places. While proposing a fragmented vision of the urban fabric, Alain Bublex emphasises the connections and interconnections of this territory, so as to remain here in the tracks. No no-places, only commonplaces, places of shared experience, of the everyday, but also places of banality.

An aesthetic of the ordinary that echoes the works of the American photographers of the *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* (1975), but also and especially those of the photographic mission project of the DATAR (Délégation interministérielle à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Attractivité Régionale) in the 1980s. Sent out on the road to represent a French territory lacking an identity, the missionary photographers attempted to give a coherency back to contemporary landscapes. Alain Bublex's approach is nevertheless different, because the search for coherency is no longer in the image itself, but in the accumulation of photos. A serial form functioning like a dialogue between the plots of a territory that is often considered fragmented. The strategy put into place hence results in a panorama both accurate and surprising: an urban form flush with the surfaces of flux.

Raphaële Bertho  
Photography historian

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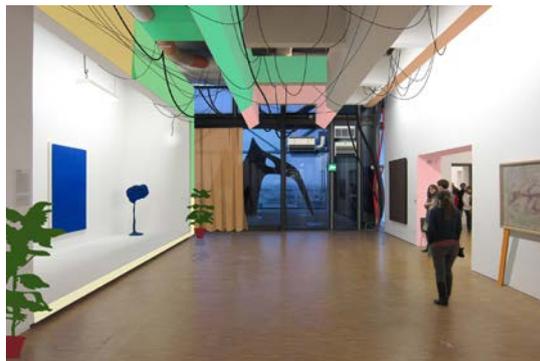
**FIAC**

booth 0.A09

20 - 23  
October

Glooscap, we thought, was made to proliferate; to become detailed and to spread out; re-exhibiting this fictitious and entirely plausible city would be like updating the encyclopaedia of a subject in a state of constant renewal. We would have visited Glooscap II, then Glooscap III, IV, V... If this is not how things turned out, it is because Glooscap is not what it seems, which is to say a fictitious city, an imaginary city whose reality would increase with its research and literature.

Glooscap's logic is not fictional: it does not tend, like all fiction secretly desires, to draw closer asymptotically to a possible reality (with the barely concealed aim of taking its place). Glooscap's logic is prototypical and subtractive: what minimum of reality and fiction do I need to construct a false-true city, one that works: a true prototype of an average city? Fiction is in fact just a means of not completing reality and it only operates in small doses. Glooscap's force derives from this delicate 'in-between', the in-between of a project on the point of being realised (*Voiture Meunier-Béraud*), or that is only realised when becoming unreal (*Plan Voisin de Paris*). We now understand why there will never be Glooscap II, III or IV and that we can merely repeat Glooscap, in other words re-exhibit it exactly. Or nearly. Because, although it is forbidden to add, we can still subtract: establish a distance, objectify, as was the case at *La force de l'art 02* exhibition, where the original Glooscap exhibition was presented like a work of art, rendered a museum object by its showcases; or, as is the case here, in the Galerie Vallois's Project Room, where a room from the original 1994 exhibition (which took place in the same gallery) is reproduced exactly but in the form of a series of 'phantoms', trompe-l'œil reproductions of 'false' Glooscap 'documents': plans, maps, sketches, oil paintings and watercolours,



Paysage 91 - L'Olympic Dazzleship quittant le port de Glooscap

fresco studies, etc. The subtractive distance previously established by the showcases here operates through the rough digitisation, which allows Glooscap to pursue an existence that tends towards abstraction and erasure.

An operation that we find back to front in the 'Indian wall' that, in the main gallery, replicates a part of the mural installation Alain Bublex presented in the *Paris-Delhi-Bombay* exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou under the title *Contribution #2 - Delhi Cold Storage, notes et hypothèses (de travail)*. Photographs of New Delhi clearly grouped together according to kinds of objects or landscapes - building façades, tangles of electrical wires, flower pots, ventilation pipes, museum spaces, vehicles, etc. - and whose first (aesthetic) impression fades relatively quickly.

The second impression: an amused and admiring inventory of urban constructivism; some photographs are accompanied by a drawing that elucidates the apparently impossible functioning of the represented objects (for example, a hybrid of a wheelbarrow, bike and scooter that nevertheless works).

The third - which passes by the photograph of two metallic arches in the middle of a wasteland accompanied by a drawing of the complete, reconstituted object: a two-person storm tent - makes us say that reality is dysfunctional and therefore mixed, full of prototypes, fictions and unfulfilled ideals; and that one of the roles of the artist could be to (re)exhibit the incompleteness.

To 'incomplete' reality (a second time). It seems to us this is what Alain Bublex does and we could hence generalise: each exhibition incompletes the one prior and here, moreover, the first.

Bastien Gallet

Contribution #2

